

Existing law provides for the appointment and commissioning of forestry officers by the state forester to enforce the laws for protection of forest woodlands. Further provides the forestry officers with the same authority and powers of regular law enforcement officers with respect to issuing civil citations for littering and criminal offenses to include: arson, littering, theft, burglary, disorderly conduct, disturbing the peace, and conduct constituting resisting arrest, assault, or battery of a commissioned forestry officer. Additionally, provides forestry officers with the powers and authority of regular law enforcement officers during any riot, insurrection, or natural disaster, or while protecting the real property of the La. Forestry Commission.

New law adds any interests relating to forest woodlands in the enforcement of laws protecting woodlands and expands the enforcement parameters to include rules and regulations. Allows the forestry officers to take such action as authorized by law, rule, or regulation to protect interests relating to forest woodlands.

New law removes the specific list of criminal offenses for citation issuance and provides for citations for criminal and other offenses affecting the protection of interests relating to forest woodlands and affecting the performance of duties. Requires all forestry officers to be P.O.S.T. certified. Adds the protection of property, assets, and resources of the office of forestry to the jurisdiction of forestry officers with respect to their authority and powers during any riot, insurrection, or natural disaster. Expands the powers of the forestry officers at the request of any state law enforcement agency in the enforcement of the state's police powers and other related duties as imposed by the legislature.

Existing law provides that a Class "E" driver's license is the only driver's license required of a full-time, regularly paid operator of emergency medical vehicles or firefighting equipment employed by a municipality, parish, fire protection district, or other political subdivision of the state, or civilian employees of the U.S. military who are required to operate emergency vehicles.

New law adds the Dept. of Agriculture and Forestry to the list of employers of full-time, regularly paid operators of an emergency medical vehicle or firefighting equipment required to obtain a Class "E" driver's license when operating such vehicles or equipment in the scope of employment. Provides that emergency vehicles or firefighting equipment be equipped with audible and visual signals as required by Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration rules.

Effective upon signature of governor (June 25, 2009).

(Amends R.S. 3:4274.1 and R.S. 32:402(C)(1))